

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Subregion: NORTH CENTRAL **County:** SIERRA

Applicant: THE PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

Project Title: LEMON CANYON RANCH

Reference Number: SNC 070278

PROJECT SCOPE

The Pacific Forest Trust proposes to complete pre-acquisition activities necessary to prepare for acquisition of a conservation easement on 1,400 acres of working forest land on Lemon Canyon Ranch in Sierra County. Acquisition of a conservation easement on Lemon Canyon Ranch would:

- Maintain the property's eastside pine forest, Sierran mixed-conifer forest, sagebrush, wet meadow, montane riparian, and juniper habitats;
- Protect 3.5 miles of Lemon Creek and its tributaries;
- Protect diverse habitat for over 250 wildlife species;
- Maintain the property as an historic and scenic working ranch;
- Restore forest resources on the ranch to later seral stages, promoting wildlife habitat and decreasing the risk of catastrophic fire and sedimentation of the watercourses.

Steps critical to a successful project include:

- Project planning, development, and management;
- Easement negotiation and legal review;
- Completion of an appraisal report;
- Production of a baseline report and monitoring plan to aid in long-term management of the easement.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Complete appraisal report	May - August 2008
Develop baseline report and monitoring plan	October 31, 2008
Develop conservation plan	October 31, 2008
Identify and begin pursuing funding for conservation easement acquisition	October – December 2008
Final Report/Final Payment Request	January 31, 2009

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project planning, development, and management	\$15,000
Easement negotiation and legal review	\$10,000
Appraisal services	\$10,000
Production of baseline report and monitoring plan	\$15,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$50,000

Letters of Support:

- none

Recommendation:

Staff recommends funding the requested amount of \$50,000.

SNC 070278- Lemon Canyon Ranch

2. Lemon Canyon Ranch Project Summary

Located in the southwestern portion of the Sierra Valley in Sierra County, the Lemon Canyon Ranch consist of 3 legal parcels encompassing 1,400 acres and approximately 3.5 miles of Lemon Creek and its tributaries. The Lemon Canyon Ranch is actively used for cattle grazing and timber production. The Ranch is strategically located in what the Pacific Forest Trust has named the “Southern Corridor of Working Forests,” which is defined by the properties that sit along the edge of Sierra Valley where the Valley floor transitions to the upland forest ecosystems. This Corridor plays a critical role in the Sierra Valley’s ecological and economic health, by providing approximately half of the Valley’s water supply in addition to important wildlife habitat connectivity between the open meadows and upland forests.

The waters of Lemon Creek and its tributaries flow into the floor of Sierra Valley where they irrigate grazing pastures, provide necessary water to the wet meadows and wetlands and flow into the Middle Fork of the Feather River, a federally-designated Wild and Scenic River. The water flow from Lemon Canyon Ranch and the rest of the Southern Corridor provides over 50% of the water that feeds into the Sierra Valley wetland system, which is the largest alpine wetlands area in the Sierra Nevada and supports the greatest concentration and diversity of waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors in the Ecoregion. The Lemon Canyon Ranch itself provides a diversity of wildlife habitat including: eastside pine forest, Sierran Mixed conifer forest, sagebrush, wet meadow, montane riparian, and juniper, which provide habitat for a number of rare and threatened species.

In the southern end of the Sierra Valley, the Lemon Canyon Ranch is within commuting distance from growing population centers Truckee and Reno and is easily accessible by Highway 89 and 49, making it particularly at risk to the increasing development pressures in the Sierra. The protection of the Ranch through a conservation easement will address the threats to water quality and wildlife habitat through its restrictions, which will dedicate the property to relatively natural forest and meadow habitats and its traditional uses of forestry and agriculture.

State, regional and local plans all call for the protection of historical agricultural landscapes of the Sierra Valley, promoting the goals of working landscapes in conjunction with water quality, scenic values and wildlife habitat protection. Given the imminent development threats and the considerable water and wildlife resources on Lemon Canyon Ranch, its permanent protection is a high priority for the public and private partners working downstream. The Pacific Forest Trust respectfully requests \$50,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in order to cover the costs associated with project planning and management, appraisal services, easement negotiations, and baseline/monitoring report development. The Conservancy’s grant funds would be leveraged by nearly \$2,571,000 of in-kind and monetary match from the landowner and other public and private partners.